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(54) **BATTERY PROTECTION IN AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE**

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CPC B60K 1/04; B60K 2001/0438; B62D 25/2072; B60Y 2306/01
See application file for complete search history.

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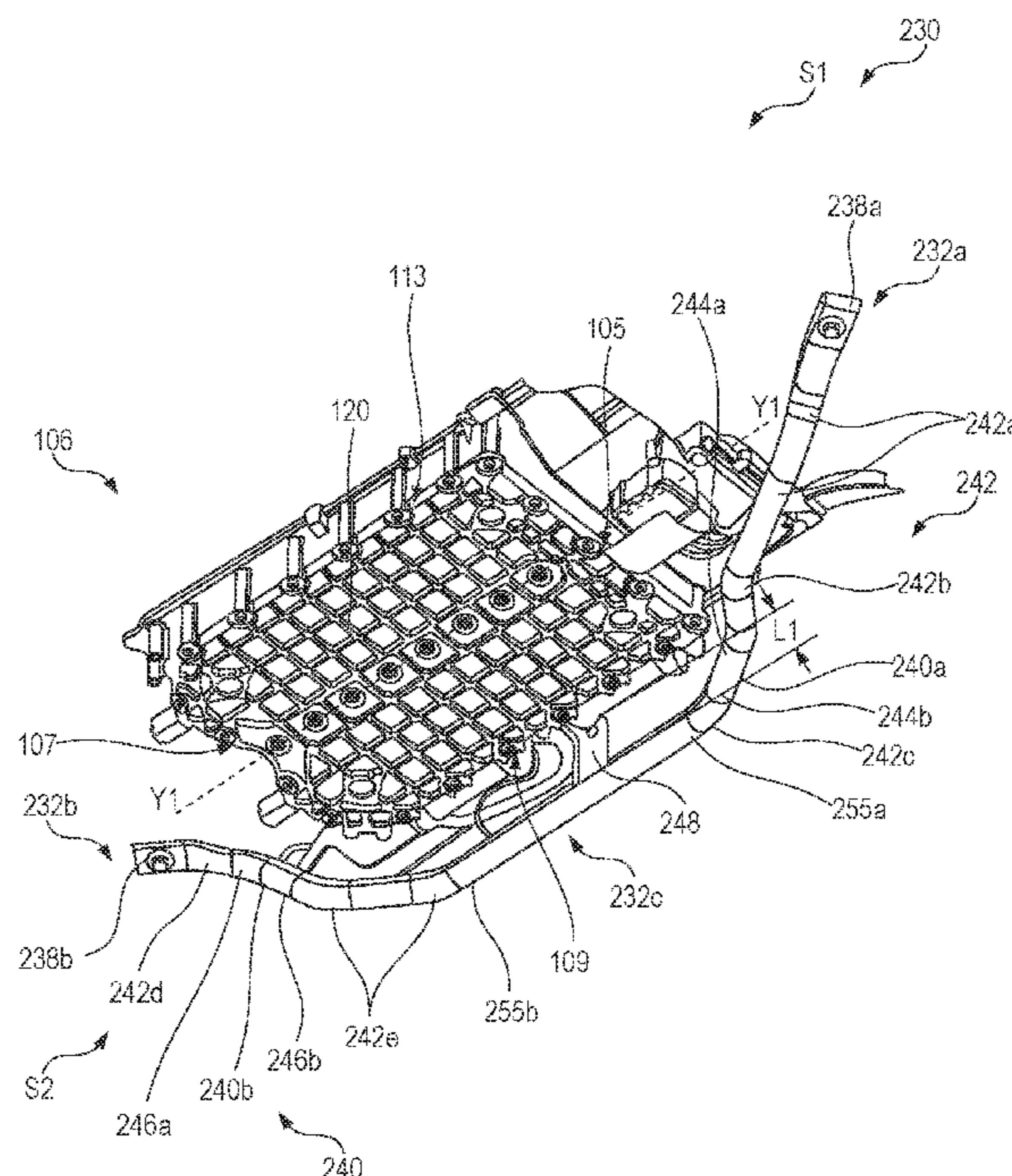
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present disclosure is directed to a slider bar to protect a battery pack of a vehicle. The battery pack is housed on an underbody in between the vehicle's front and rear axles. The battery pack protrudes towards the ground. The battery pack can optionally be covered by a shield that has a slot through which the slider bar extends outwards towards the ground. The slider bar is coupled to the underbody near the battery pack. The slider bar is positioned lower than the battery pack such that in an event of the vehicle bottoming out, the impact will be absorbed by the slider bar instead of the battery pack. Thereby, the slider bar protects the battery pack from scraping/scratching the ground.

19 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



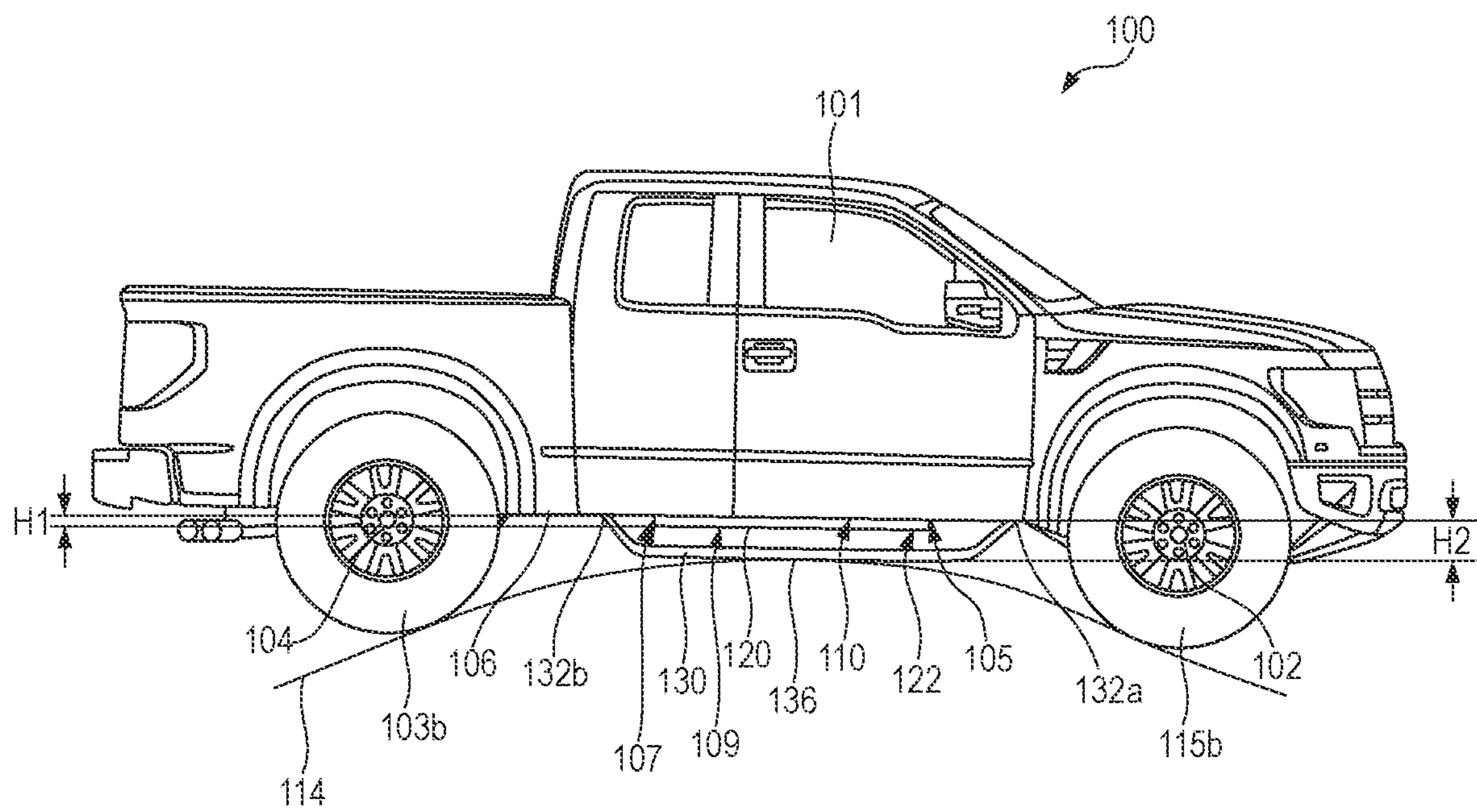


FIG. 1A

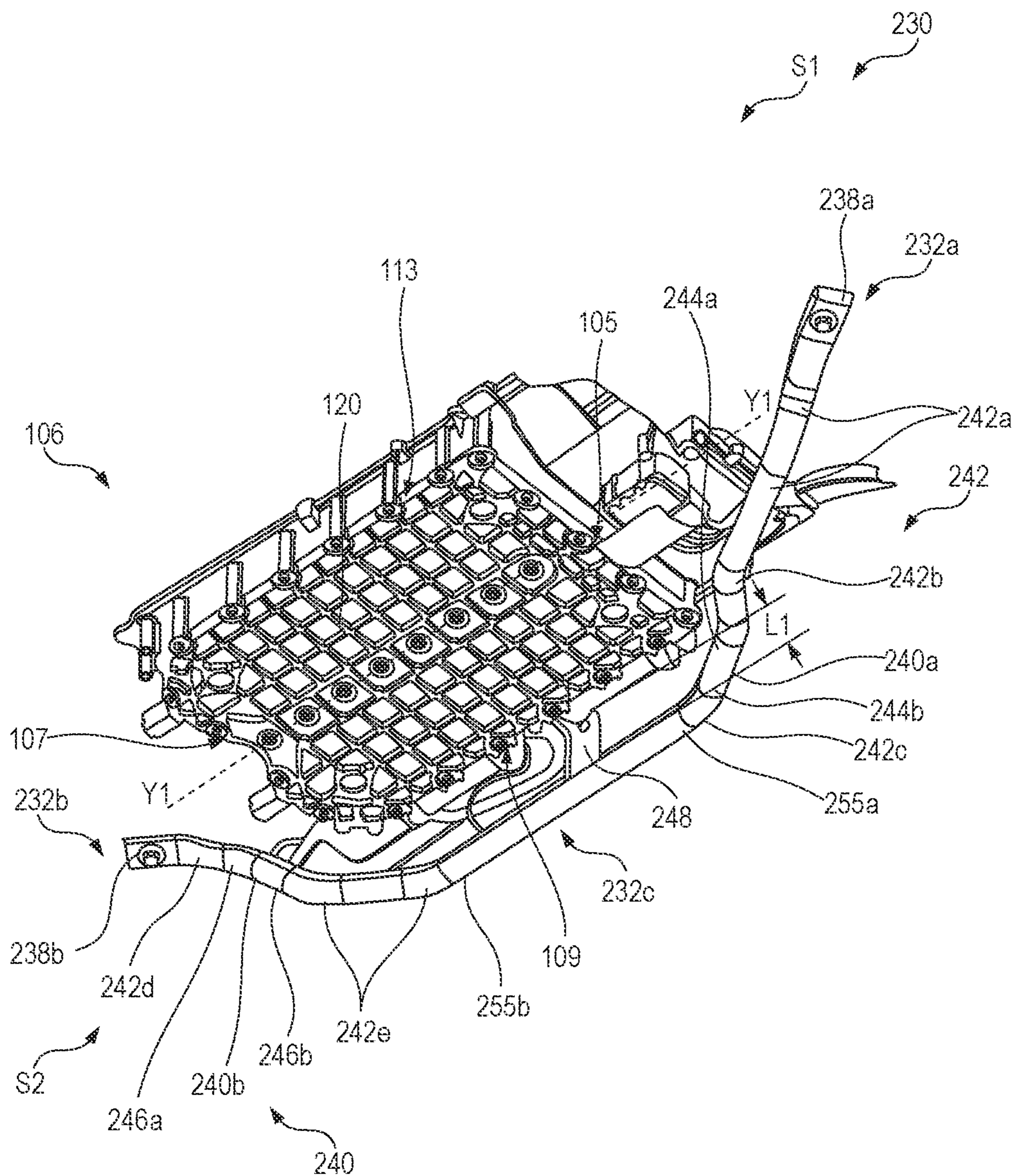


FIG. 2

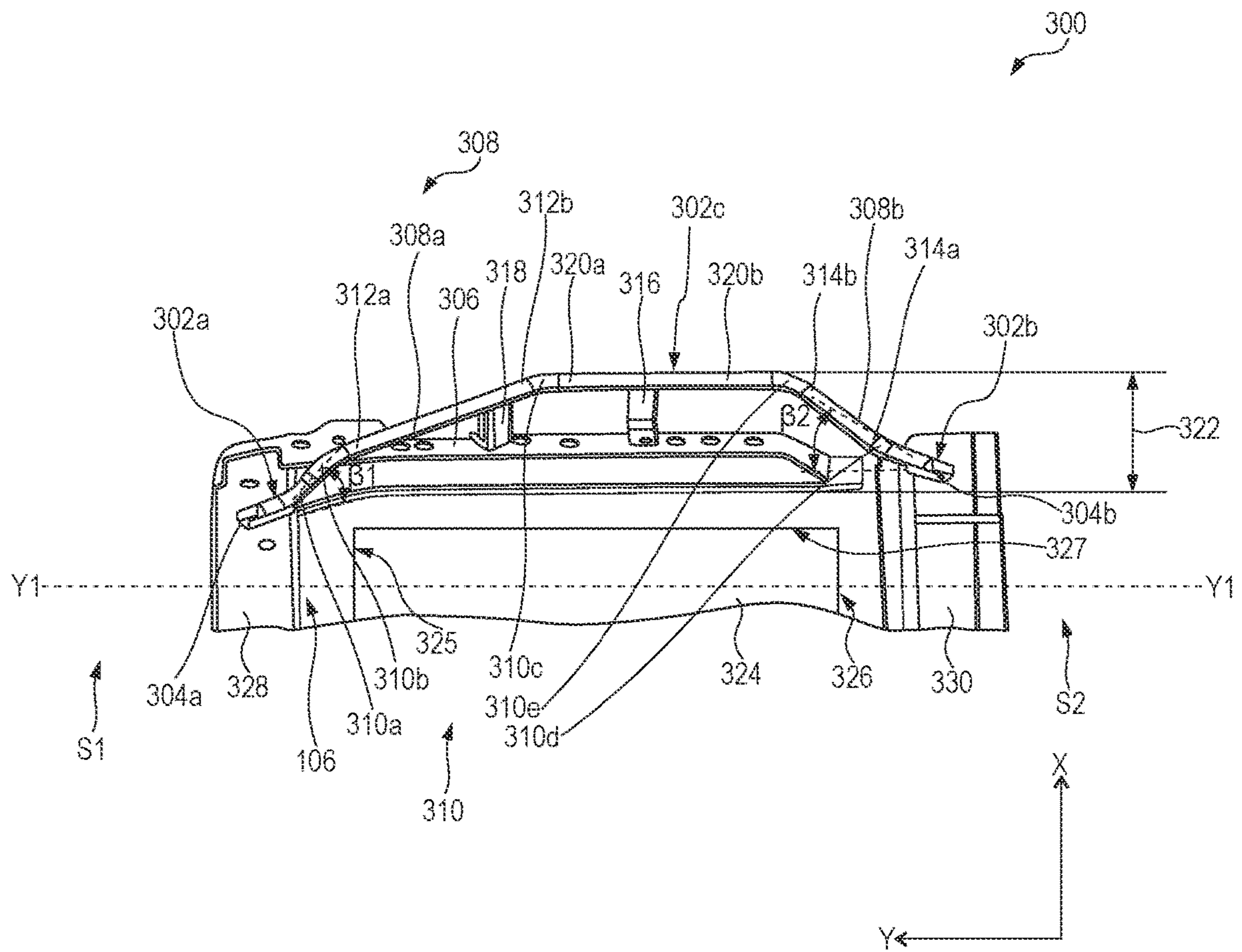


FIG. 3

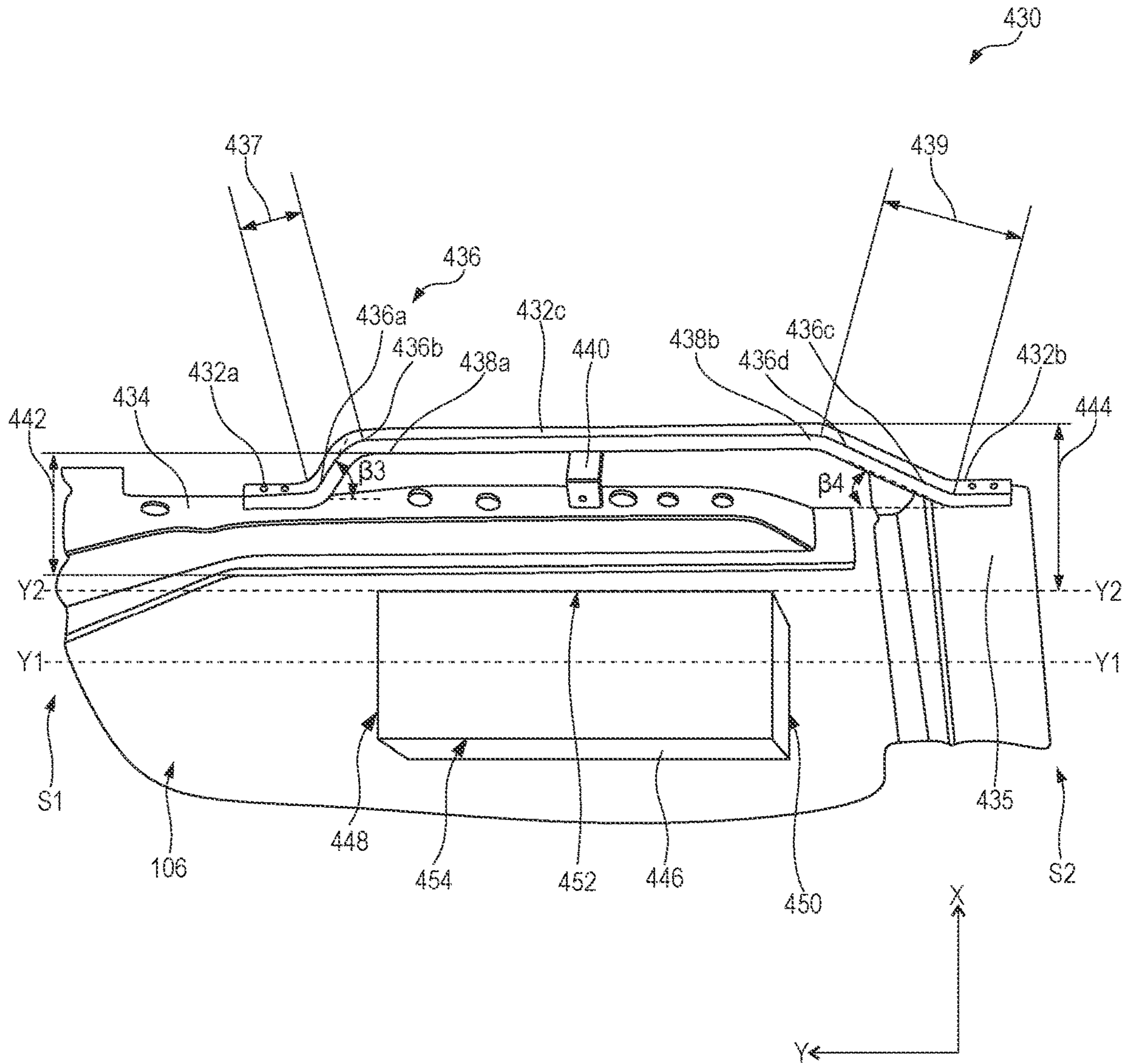


FIG. 4

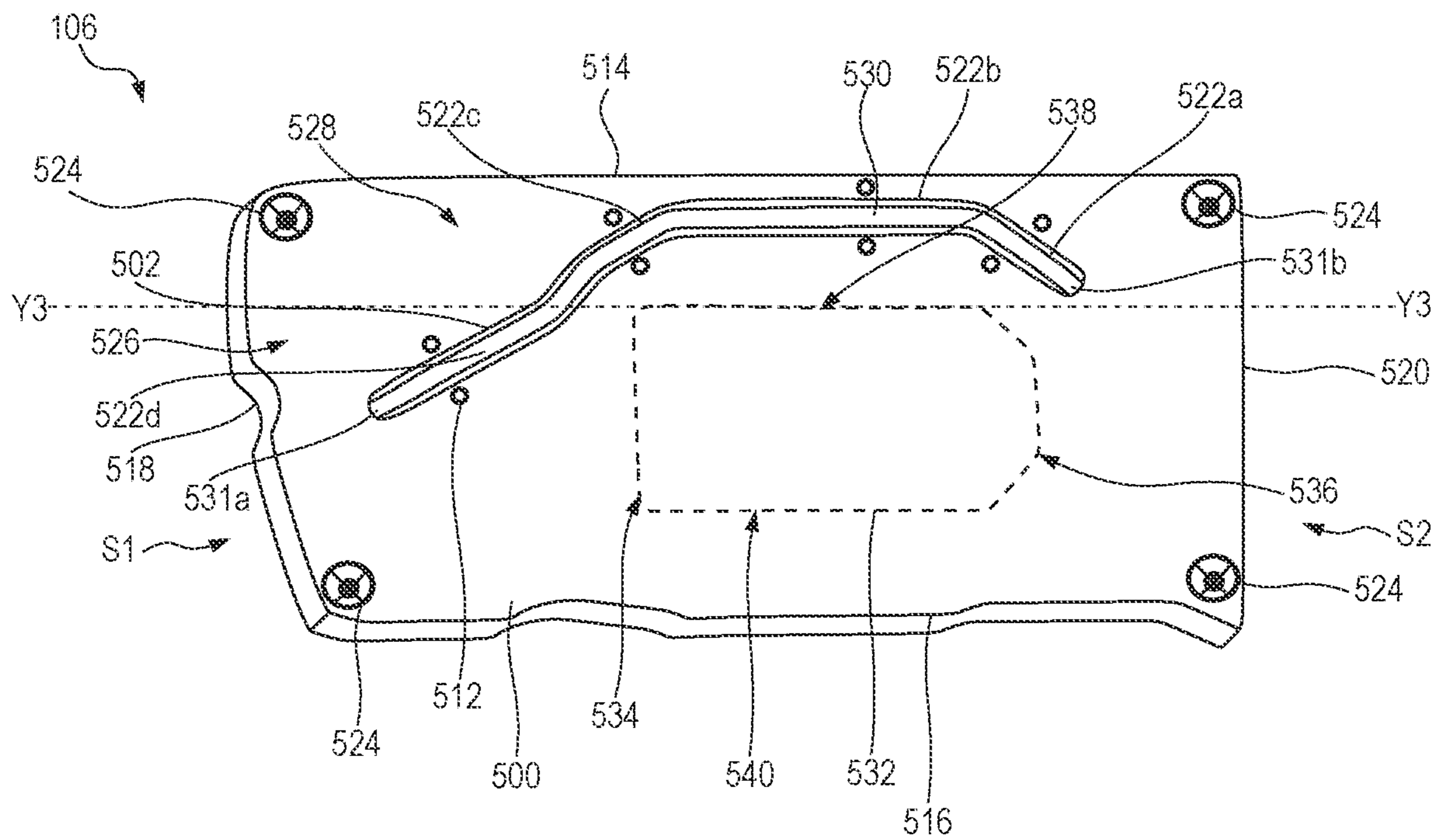


FIG. 5A

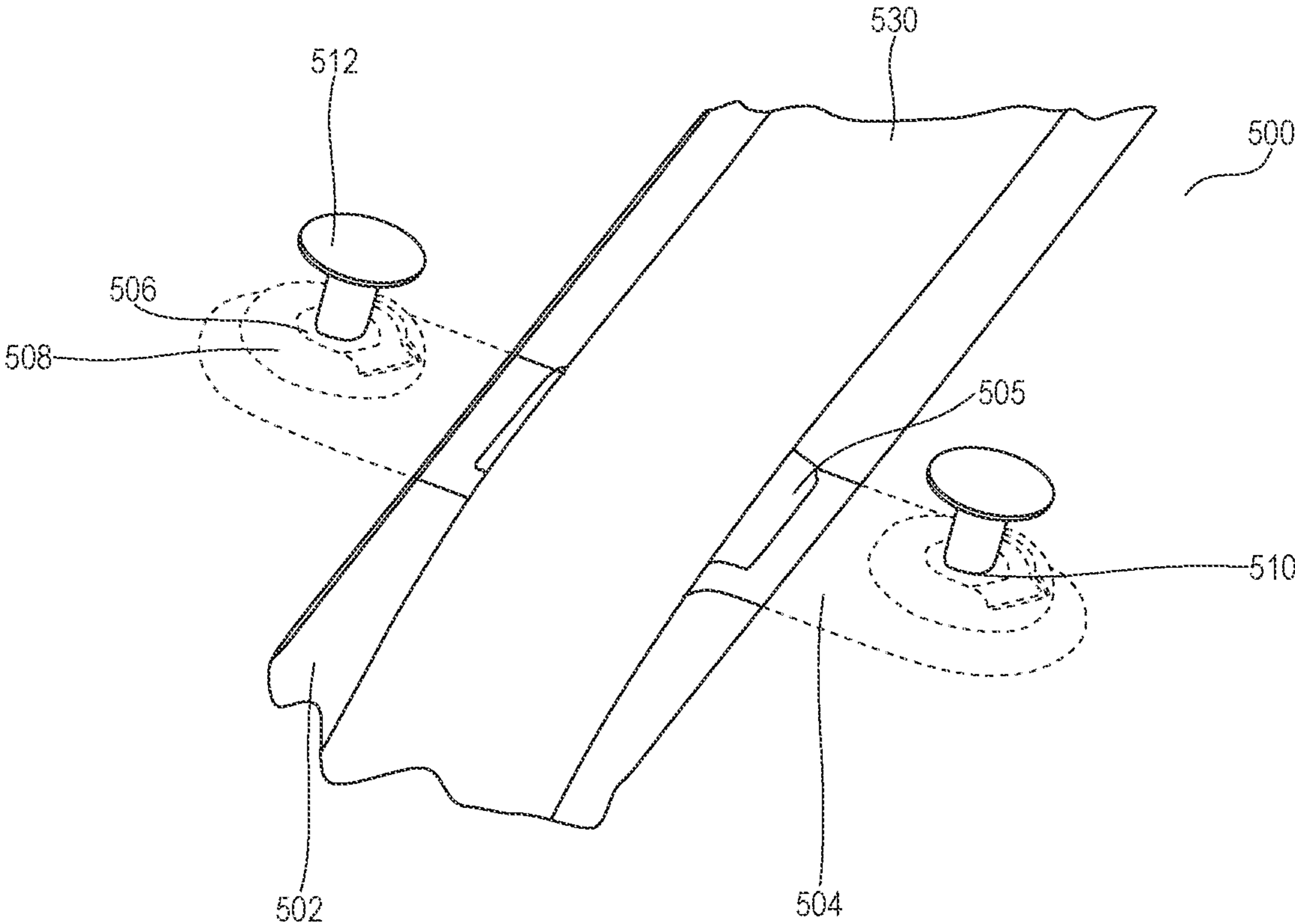


FIG. 5B

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**BATTERY PROTECTION IN AN ELECTRIC
VEHICLE**

BACKGROUND

Technical Field

The present disclosure relates to a slider bar for a battery pack of an electric vehicle.

Description of the Related Art

Battery packs may be mounted on an underside of an electric vehicle underbody positioned near a front axle. The battery pack protrudes towards the ground, which can impact an amount of ground clearance. Uneven roadways may interact with an exterior surface of the battery pack in some configurations and situations.

BRIEF SUMMARY

The present disclosure is directed to a slider bar assembly that separates a battery pack of a vehicle from the ground. The design and placement of the slider bar enables the slider bar to absorb ground impacts and minimizes the effect of the ground impact on the battery pack. The slider bar can be incorporated in electric vehicles having a longer wheelbase, such as trucks, sport utility vehicles, and crossover utility vehicles. The longer wheelbases may result in an exterior-most surface of the battery pack being closer to the ground. To maintain performance, the slider bar is positioned to separate the battery pack from a bulge or obstacle on a road surface or on a steep driveway or ramp.

The battery pack is positioned beneath an underbody in between a front axle and a rear axle. The battery pack extends from the underbody towards the ground. The slider bar is coupled to the underbody and extends further than the battery pack towards the ground. The slider bar will absorb ground impacts and keep the battery pack spaced from the ground.

The vehicle may include a shield or a battery pack cover that couples with the underbody and covers the battery pack. The shield includes a slot through which the slider bar extends past the battery pack. The slider bar is coupled with the underbody and the shield.

The slider bar is coupled to the underbody using a first end and a second end of the slider bar. The first end and the second end are each coupled to the underbody at least 30 cm away from both the front axle and the rear axle. The slider bar further includes an intermediate portion between the first end and the second end. The intermediate portion is a non-linear shape that curves or bends around a side of the battery pack.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL
VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1A is a side view of a vehicle with a battery pack and a slider bar, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 1B is a simplified bottom view of an underbody with the battery pack and the slider bar of FIG. 1A;

FIG. 2 is a slider bar adjacent to a battery, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 3 is a bottom perspective view of a slider bar, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

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FIG. 4 is another example of a slider bar, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 5A is a shield or a battery cover covering a battery pack and a slider bar, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 5B is a coupling mechanism (tabs) to couple the slider bar with the shield of FIG. 5A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following description, certain specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of various disclosed embodiments. However, one skilled in the relevant art will recognize that embodiments may be practiced without one or more of these specific details, or with other methods, components, materials, etc. In other instances, well-known structures or methods associated with vehicles have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring descriptions of the embodiments.

FIGS. 1A and 1B are views of a vehicle 100 with a slider bar 130 and a battery pack 120, according to one embodiment. FIG. 1A is a side view of the vehicle 100 and FIG. 1B is a simplified view of an underside or an underbody 106 of the vehicle 100.

The vehicle 100 may be an electric vehicle, a hybrid vehicle, a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, or a battery electric vehicle. The battery pack 120 is positioned between a front axle 102 and a rear axle 104. A set of rear tires 103a, 103b are coupled to the rear axle 104 and a set of front tires 115a, 115b are coupled to the front axle 102. The battery or the battery pack 120 is affixed to the underside 106 of the body, which may correspond to a position of a passenger compartment 101. The battery pack 120 includes a front edge 105 and a rear edge 107. The slider bar 130 includes a first end 132a closer to the front axle 102 and a second end 132b that is closer to the rear axle 104. The front edge 105 of the battery pack 120 is closer to the first end 132a of the slider bar 130, and the rear edge 107 is closer to the second end 132b. The battery pack 120 may be positioned equidistant from the front axle 102 and the rear axle 104 or may be positioned closer to the front axle 102 than the rear axle 104.

The underside or the underbody 106 provides a surface area and mechanical support for housing various components of the vehicle 100 such as electric motors, transmission, and suspension parts and supports an interior floor of the passenger compartment 101, among other things. The underbody 106 includes a lower surface 110 that faces towards ground or roadway 112. The battery pack 120 is coupled to the lower surface 110 of the underbody 106 that could include a recess for the battery pack 120 to be coupled within. Fasteners, adhesives, and other coupling techniques attach the battery pack 120 to the lower surface 110 of the underbody 106. In one example, the underbody 106 includes holes or retaining openings that can receive fasteners to secure the battery pack 120 with flanges or extensions that include corresponding openings, see openings 111.

As the battery pack 120 occupies space and is mounted under the underbody 106, the battery pack 120 protrudes or otherwise extends below the underbody 106 towards the ground 112 and in a direction away from the underbody 106. In FIG. 1A, the battery pack 120 has a height H1, which corresponds to a distance between a bottom surface 122 of the battery pack 120 and the lower surface 110 of the underbody 106. The height H1 and dimensions of the battery pack 120 may vary depending on the type of batteries used to assemble the battery pack 120.

The battery pack **120** provides power to various devices, including electric motors and other electrical components of the vehicle **100**. The battery pack **120** may include a set of batteries or individual battery cells configured in a series, a parallel or a hybrid combination, to deliver a voltage, capacity, or power density. The number of batteries and the number of individual battery cells used in the battery pack **120** may vary depending upon the type of vehicle **100**.

The ground clearance of the vehicle **100** is a distance between the bottom surface **122** of the battery pack **120** and the ground **112**. As a wheelbase of the vehicle **100** is increased, a ramp break over (RBO) angle is decreased. The RBO angle is an arc **114** between the front tires **115a**, **115b** and the rear tires **103a**, **103b** and lowest surface of components under the vehicle **100**. The RBO is dependent on the wheelbase, suspension height, tire size, and other floor body components of the vehicle **100**. The RBO angle identifies when the vehicle **100** will interact with the ground **112** when over steep driveway ramps, parking structure ramps, irregular and uneven roads, and off-road features, for example.

The slider bar **130** is coupled to the underbody **106**, in a proximity of the battery pack **120** to adjust the ground clearance of the vehicle **100**. The first end **132a** and the second end **132b** form proximal and distal ends of the slider bar **130**, respectively. The slider bar **130** includes a first portion **132c** that extends from the first end **132a** to a first curved portion **132d**. The slider bar **130** further includes a second portion **132e** that extends from the second end **132b** to a second curved portion **132f**. An intermediate portion **132g** extends from the first curved portion **132d** to the second curved portion **132f**. The first portion **132c** is at a first angle with respect to a central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120** that corresponds to a Y-axis. The first angle is, for example, in the range of 35 and 50 degrees. The second portion **132e** is at a second angle with respect to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120**. The second angle is smaller than the first angle. The second angle may be in the range of 20 and 30 degrees.

The first end **132a** is coupled to the underbody **106** at a distance D1 from the front axle **102**. The second end **132b** is coupled to the underbody **106** at a distance D2 from the rear axle **104**. The distances D1 and D2 generally vary between 30 to 50 centimeters (cm). The distance D1 is greater than the distance D2. The distances D1 and D2 will vary depending on the type of the vehicle **100** (pickup, hatchback, sedan). Further, the slider bar **130** may be coupled to the underbody **106** using bolts, welding, fasteners, or any other suitable techniques.

The first end **132a** is closer to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120** than the second end **132b** of the slider bar **130**. The first end **132a** is closer to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120** than an edge **109** of the battery pack **120**. The edge **109** is closer to a centerline C1-C1 of the vehicle **100** and is opposite to another edge **113** that is along a passenger side S4 of the vehicle **100**. The second end **132b** is further from the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120** than the edge **109**. The intermediate portion **132g** is the furthest feature of the slider bar **130** from the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120**.

In this embodiment, the battery pack **120** is positioned closer to the passenger side S4 than a driver's side S3. The slider bar **130** is positioned between the battery pack **120** and the centerline C1-C1 of the vehicle **100**. In some embodiments, the slider bar **130** may have the first and second ends **132a**, **b** coupled to the passenger side S4 of the centerline

C1-C1 of the vehicle **100**, while at least part of the intermediate portion **132g** crosses or overlaps the centerline C1-C1 of the vehicle **100**.

The first end **132a** and the second end **132b** help in offsetting the slider bar **130** laterally from the battery pack **120** by a distance L1. The offset distance is of a few centimeters (5-10 cm, for example). The slider bar **130** is offset away from the battery pack **120** towards a lateral edge **134** of the underbody **106**. As in FIG. 1B, the slider bar **130** does not overlap the battery pack **120** when looking from a bottom view.

The slider bar **130** protrudes and extends outward below the underbody **106** towards the ground **112** and with a bottom surface **136** between the ground **112** and the battery pack **120**. This positioning allows a safe distance from the ground **112** to minimize damage to the battery **120**. The bottom surface **136** of the slider bar **130** is at a distance H2 from the lower surface **110** of the underbody **106**. In all embodiments of the present disclosure, the distance H2 is greater than the height H1. In an example, the distance H2 is 5 mm to 10 mm more than the height H1, which means, if the height H1 is 10 millimeters (mm), the distance H2 is 15 mm to 20 mm.

The arrangement of the battery pack **120** and the slider bar **130** positions the slider bar **130** to impact the ground **112** to protect the battery pack **120** in the event the vehicle **100** bottoms out. Accordingly, the slider bar **130** protects the battery pack **120** from, for example, scratches, and impacts with the ground **112**. During the impacts, deflection of the slider bar **130** is controlled by its design (offsetting of the slider bar **130**) such that the slider bar **130** does not make contact with the battery pack **120**, even during maximum deflection. In order to ensure that the slider bar **130** has sufficient strength and a long service life, the slider bar **130** may be composed of materials such as high-strength steel, titanium, composites, aluminum, and/or combinations thereof.

The slider bar **130** is made hollow to reduce weight and be cost-effective, but in some examples, the slider bar **130** may be solid. The cross section of the slider bar **130** may be circular, rectangular, triangular, oval, square, or of any other suitable shape.

FIG. 2 is an alternative embodiment of a slider bar **230** arranged on the underside **106** of the vehicle **100** adjacent to the battery pack **120**, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure. The slider bar **230** includes a first end **232a**, a second end **232b**, and an intermediate portion **232c**. The first end **232a** and the second end **232b** form proximal and distal ends of the slider bar **230**, respectively. The first end **232a** is closer to the front edge **105** and the second end **232b** is closer to the rear edge **107** of the battery pack **120**. The first end **232a** is coupled to the underbody **106** and positioned between the front axle **102** of the vehicle **100**, illustrated in FIG. 1B, and the front edge **105** of the battery pack **120**. The second end **232b** is coupled to the underbody **106** and positioned between the rear axle **104** of the vehicle **100**, illustrated in FIG. 1B, and the rear edge **107** of the battery pack **120**.

The slider bar **230** is an irregularly shaped beam that includes various straight members **240** and angled members **242** specifically selected to conform to a shape of the battery pack **120** and the associated vehicle **100**. The various combinations of the straight members **240** and the angled members **242** are selected based on various factors such as vehicle design, desired strength of the slider bar **230**, and sizing of the battery pack **120**.

The first end **232a** of the slider bar **230** includes a first straight member **240a** and three angled or angular members, i.e., **242a**, **242b**, and **242c**. Similarly, the second end **232b** of the slider bar **230** includes a second straight member **240b** and two angled or angular members, i.e., **242d** and **242e**.

The first angular member **242a** elevates the first end **232a** from the underbody **106** to a first angle, with respect to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120** and connects with the second angular member **242b**. The first angle, for example, is in the range of 35 and 50 degrees. The second angular member **242b** connects with a proximal end **244a** of the first straight member **240a**. The angular member **242c** connects a distal end **244b** (opposite to the proximal end **244a**) of the first straight member **240a** to a first portion **255a** of the intermediate portion **232c**. The first straight member **240a** and the angular member **242c** extend in a tilted or an angled manner along a straight line to achieve a vertical height up to the first portion **255a** of the intermediate portion **232c**. The angular member **242c** is coupled to the first portion **255a** of the intermediate portion **232c** and is substantially parallel to the underbody **106**.

Similarly, the third angular member **242d** elevates the second end **232b** from the underbody **106** to a second angle with respect to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **120** that may be different from the first angle. The second angle, for example, is in the range of 35 and 50 degrees. In an implementation, the second angle is smaller than the first angle. In another implementation, the first and second angles are equal, that is the first and second ends **232a** and **232b** are structurally similar.

The angular member **242d** connects with a proximal end **246a** of the second straight member **240b**. The angular member **242e** connects a distal end **246b** (opposite to the proximal end **246a**) of the second straight member **240b** to a second portion **255b** of the intermediate portion **232c**. The second straight member **240b** and the angular member **242e** extends in a tilted or an angled manner along a straight line to achieve the height up to the second portion **255b** of the intermediate portion **232c**. The angular member **242e** is coupled to the second portion **255b** of the intermediate portion **232c** and is substantially parallel to the underbody **106**.

The first and second ends **232a** and **232b** integrally join to the intermediate portion **232c**. The intermediate portion **232c** is a straight solid bar and runs parallel to the underbody **106**. The design and arrangement of the straight members **240** and the angled members **242**, as described in the paragraphs above, help in offsetting the intermediate portion **232c** laterally from the battery pack **120** by the distance L1.

The intermediate portion **232c** is offset laterally by the distance L1 from the battery pack **120** so that the intermediate portion **232c** does not make contact with the battery pack **120** or high voltage (HV) wiring even under maximum deflection.

The first end **232a** and the second end **232b** are continuous structures with a constant cross-sectional area. The slider bar **230** has a substantially circular cross-sectional area. Alternatively, the first end **232a** and the second end **232b** may flatten out to flat bar structures **238a** and **238b** near the underbody **106**. The flat bar structures **238a** and **238b** may improve the overall strength of couplings. The flat bar structure **238b** may be coupled to the underbody **106** on one side of the central axis Y1-Y1 such that the structure **238b** is closer to the edge **109** of the battery pack **120** compared to the edge **113**. The flat bar structure **238a** is coupled on another side of the central axis Y1-Y1 such that

the structure **238a** is closer to the edge **113** compared to the edge **109** of the battery pack **120**.

The intermediate portion **232c** includes a bracket **248** that is coupled to the intermediate portion **232c** at one end and to the underbody **106** at another end. The slider bar **230** may include multiple brackets to couple with the underbody **106** and support the slider bar **230** to absorb any potential impacts.

The intermediate portion **232c** protects the battery pack **120** and the HV wiring when the vehicle **100** bottoms out. The battery pack **120** is also prevented from being impacted when the vehicle **100** travels on an uneven road surface, thereby, improving service life of the battery pack **120**.

The entirety of the slider bar **230** (the first end **232a**, the second end **232b**, and the intermediate portion **232c**) is manufactured as a single unit via casting, forming, additive manufacturing, or by any other suitable process. Alternatively, the first end **232a**, the second end **232b**, and the intermediate portion **232c** can be manufactured separately and be coupled using a suitable method like welding, for example. Also, the materials of the slider bar **230** may be composed of high-strength steel, titanium, composites, aluminum, and/or combinations thereof. The slider bar **230** may further include an abrasive coating of rubber or an anti-rust material. This may increase the service life of the slider bar **230** and improves its corrosion resistance.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a slider bar **300** arranged on the underside **106** of the vehicle **100** adjacent to a battery pack **324**, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure. FIG. 3 is a simplified perspective view that shows only an outline of the battery pack **324** for the purpose of brevity. The battery pack **324** includes an edge **325** and an edge **326** that is parallel to the edge **325**. The edge **325** is closer to the front axle **102** compared to the rear axle **104** of the vehicle **100**, and the edge **326** is closer to the rear axle **104** compared to the front axle **102** of the vehicle **100**. The battery pack **324** includes an edge **327** and another edge (not shown) that is parallel to the edge **327**. The edge **327** is closer to the slider bar **300** compared to the another edge.

The slider bar **300** includes a first end **302a**, a second end **302b**, and an intermediate portion **302c**. The first end **302a** and the second end **302b** form proximal and distal ends of the slider bar **300**, respectively. The first end **302a** is closer to the front edge **325** and the second end **302b** is closer to the rear edge **326** of the battery pack **324**. The first end **302a** is coupled to the underbody **106** and positioned between the front axle **102** of the vehicle **100** and the front edge **325** of the battery pack **324**. The second end **302b** is coupled to the underbody **106** and positioned between the rear axle **104** of the vehicle **100** and the rear edge **326** of the battery pack **324**. The first end **302a** and the second end **302b** of the slider bar **300** are coupled on frame elements **328**, **330**, respectively.

The slider bar **300** is irregularly shaped and includes multiple straight members **308** and angled members **310** that allow the slider bar **300** to conform to a shape of the battery pack **324** and the associated vehicle **100**. The combinations of the straight members **308** and the angled members **310** are selected based on various factors such as vehicle design, desired strength of the slider bar **300**, and sizing of the battery pack **324**.

The first end **302a** of the slider bar **300** includes a first straight member **308a** and three angled or angular members, i.e., **310a**, **310b**, and **310c**. Similarly, the second end **302b** of the slider bar **300** includes a second straight member **308b** and two angled or angular members, i.e., **310d** and **310e**.

The angular member **310a** elevates the first end **302a** from the underbody **106** to a first angle β_1 that may be in the range of 35 and 50 degrees, for example 45 degrees, with respect to a central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **324** and connects with the angular member **310b**. A proximal end **312a** of the first straight member **308a** connects with the angular member **310b**. The angular member **310c** connects a distal end **312b** (opposite to the proximal end **312a**) of the first straight member **308a** to a first portion **320a** of the intermediate portion **302c**. The first straight member **308a** and the angular member **310c** extend in a tilted or an angled manner along a straight line to achieve a vertical height **322** up to the first portion **320a** of the intermediate portion **302c**. The angular member **310c** is coupled to the first portion **320a** of the intermediate portion **302c** and is substantially parallel to the underbody **106**.

Similarly, the angular member **310d** elevates the second end **302b** from the underbody **106** to a second angle β_2 that may be in the range of 35 and 50 degrees, for example 30 degrees, with respect to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **324**. The angular member **310d** connects with a proximal end **314a** of the second straight member **308b**. The angular member **310e** connects a distal end **314b** (opposite to the proximal end **314a**) of the second straight member **308b** to a second portion **320b** of the intermediate portion **302c**. The second straight member **308b** and the angular member **310e** extend in a tilted or an angled manner along a straight line to achieve the vertical height **322**. The angular member **310e** is coupled to the second portion **320b** of the intermediate portion **302c** and is substantially parallel to the underbody **106**. In one embodiment, the first and the second acute angles β_1 and β_2 are the same, i.e., the first end **302a** is structurally similar to the second end **302b**.

The first and second ends **302a** and **302b** integrally join the intermediate portion **302c**, which is a straight solid bar and runs parallel to the underbody **106**. The intermediate portion **302c** is laterally offset from the battery pack **324** so that the intermediate portion **302c** does not make contact with the battery pack **324** or HV wiring even under maximum deflection.

A first support **304a**, a second support **304b**, and one or more frame elements **306** may be coupled to the underbody **106**. The first end **302a** of the slider bar **300** is coupled with the first support **304a** and the second end **302b** of the slider bar **300** is coupled with the second support **304b**, opposite to the first support **304a**. The first support **304a** and the second support **304b** are thin flattened strips that increase the mechanical strength of couplings. The first end **302a** and the second end **302b** are coupled to the first support **304a** and the second support **304b**, respectively. In one example, the first support **304a** and the second support **304b** are a part of the frame element **306** of the underbody **106**. In one example, the frame element **306** is a sheet metal.

The first end **302a** and the second end **302b** of the slider bar **300** may be continuous structures with a constant cross-sectional area. The slider bar **300** has a substantially circular cross-sectional area. The first end **302a** and the second end **302b** may be coupled to the frame elements **328**, **330** of the underbody **106** on only one side of the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **324** such that the first and second ends **302a,b** are closer to the edge **327** compared to an opposing edge (not shown) of the battery pack **324**.

The intermediate portion **302c** includes a first bracket **316** and a second bracket **318**. The first bracket **316** is coupled to the intermediate portion **302c** at one end and to the frame element **306** at another end. The first and the second brackets **316**, **318** are manufactured with the entire slider bar **300** as

a single unit. Alternatively, the brackets **316** and **318** may be manufactured as separate components and attached to the slider bar **300** using suitable techniques. The slider bar **300** may include multiple brackets or a single bracket to couple with the underbody **106** and support the slider bar **300** to absorb any potential impacts.

The slider bar **300** may include materials and may be manufactured in ways that are similar to as discussed in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is an alternative embodiment of a slider bar **430** adjacent to a battery pack **446** according to the present disclosure. The slider bar **430** is a straight tubular structure having a substantially rectangular cross section.

The slider bar **430** includes a first end **432a**, a second end **432b**, and an intermediate portion **432c** that is between the first and second ends **432a, b**. The first end **432a** and the second end **432b** form proximal and distal ends of the slider bar **430**, respectively. The battery pack **446** includes an edge **448** and an edge **450** that is parallel to the edge **448**. The edge **448** is closer to the front axle **102** compared to the rear axle **104** and the edge **450** is closer to the rear axle **104** compared to the front axle **102**. The battery pack **446** includes an edge **452** and an edge **454** that is parallel to the edge **452**. The edge **452** is closer to the slider bar **430** compared to the edge **454**. An edge axis line Y2-Y2 that runs from the front side S1 to the rear side S2 of the vehicle **100**, corresponds to the edge **452** of the battery pack **446**. The first end **432a**, the second end **432b**, and the intermediate portion **432c** of the slider bar **430** are positioned further from a central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **446** than the outermost edge **452** of the battery pack **446** and the edge axis line Y2-Y2. The first end **432a** and the second end **432b** of the slider bar **430** are coupled on frame elements **434**, **435** that are coupled to the underbody **106** and add to a distance **444** to create sufficient separation from the battery pack **446**.

The first end **432a** and the second end **432b** of the slider bar **430** are coupled at least 50 cm away from both the front and the rear axles, **102** and **104**, respectively, illustrated in FIG. 1B. Additionally, the slider bar **430** is coupled such that the intermediate portion **432c** is located at the distance **444** from the battery pack **446**. The distance **444** is the lateral distance between the battery pack **446** and a battery-facing surface of the intermediate portion **432c**.

The first end **432a** and the second end **432b** include angular members **436**. The angular members **436** (also called angled members **436**) can be altered according to design requirements such as desired strength of the slider bar **430** and sizing of battery pack **446**.

The angled members **436** include a first angular member **436a** and a second angular member **436b** at the first end **432a**. The first angular member **436a** elevates the first end **432a** from the underbody **106** to a third acute angle β_3 (e.g., 50-65 degrees) with respect to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack **446**, so that the first end **432a** achieves a height **442**. The first end **432a** is flat and coupled to the frame element **434**. The tube is bent at the first angular member **436a** away from the underbody **106**. The second angular member **436b** is bent in a different direction than the first angular member **436a**. The second angular member **436b** is coupled to a first portion **438a** of the intermediate portion **432c** and is substantially parallel to the underbody **106**.

Similar to the first end **432a**, the angled members **436** include a third angular member **436c** and a fourth angular member **436d** that are closer to the second end **432b**. The third angular member **436c** elevates the second end **432b** from the underbody **106** to a fourth acute angle β_4 (e.g., 30-45 degrees) with respect to the central axis Y1-Y1 of the

battery pack 446, so that the second end 432b achieves the height 442. The second end 432b is flat and coupled to the frame member 435. The first end 432a and the second end 432b, may be at a same distance from the central axis Y1-Y1 of the battery pack 446.

The third angular member 436c curves or bends away from the second end 432b and away from the underbody 106. The fourth angular member 436d bends in a different direction than the third angular member 436c. A second portion 438b of the intermediate portion 432c extends from the fourth angular member 436d and is substantially parallel to the underbody 106.

A distance 437 between the first and second angular members 436a and 436b is less than a distance 439 between the third and fourth angular members 436c and 436d. The third angle $\beta 3$ is greater than the fourth angle $\beta 4$. The first and second portions 438a and 438b, as explained above, integrally join to the intermediate portion 432c. The intermediate portion 432c is a straight solid bar and runs substantially parallel to the underbody 106. The intermediate portion 432c is laterally spaced apart from the edge 452 of the battery pack 446 by the distance 444. The distance 442 between the intermediate portion 432c and the battery pack 446 is configured to separate the battery pack 446 from the ground 112, illustrated in FIG. 1A, with the intermediate portion 432c even if there is deflection of the slider bar 430 upon impact with the ground 112 or an object.

The intermediate portion 432c is coupled to the underbody 106 with a bracket 440. The bracket 440 is between the first end 432a and the second end 432b and is spaced from the edge 452 by the distance 444. The bracket 440 may be coupled to the frame member 434 with a fastener or other coupling device.

The intermediate portion 432c of the slider bar 430 is closer to the ground 112 than the battery pack 446. In an event of the vehicle 100 bottoming out, the impact will be absorbed by the slider bar 430 and the battery pack 446 will be protected.

FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrate a slider bar 530 protruding from a shield 500, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. The slider bar 530 is a non-linear bar that is coupled to the underbody 106 of the vehicle 100 with ends that are covered by the shield 500. The shield 500 includes an opening or a slot 502 through which the bar 530 can extend by a distance. Only a surface of the bar 530 extends through the opening 502. The surface of the bar 530 is configured to interact with the ground 112, illustrated in FIG. 1A, separating a cover and a battery 532 from interacting with the ground 112. The battery pack 532 includes an edge 534 and an edge 536 that is parallel to the edge 534. The edge 534 is closer to the front axle 102 compared to the rear axle 104, illustrated in FIG. 1B, and the edge 536 is closer to the rear axle 104 compared to the front axle 102. The battery pack 532 includes an edge 538 and an edge 540 that is parallel to the edge 538. The edge 538 is closer to the slider bar 530 compared to the edge 540.

The shield 500 is a cover or other physical structure that encloses the battery pack 532 and other related components to keep road debris and dust away. The shield 500 may be plastic, a plurality of composites, carbon fiber, sheet metals, or other suitable materials. The shield 500 is coupled on the underbody 106 and covers the entire battery pack 532 and high voltage wiring, for example. The shield 500 is coupled on the underbody 106 using one or more fasteners 524.

The dimensions of the shield 500 may be varied to accommodate different sizes of vehicles, battery packs, or the slider bars. For example, if a longitudinal length of the

battery pack 532 along the underbody 106 is increased or decreased, then, length of the shield 500 will be increased or decreased proportionally to that of the longitudinal length of the battery pack 532 so that the shield 500 always fully encloses the battery pack 532.

The shield 500 includes a driver side or a first side 514, a passenger side or a second side 516, a front-end side or a third side 518, and a rear-end side or a fourth side 520. The second side 516 includes one or more curvatures and is not parallel to the first side 514. Alternatively, the second side 516 can be parallel to the first side 514. Similarly, the third side 518 or the fourth side 520 may include curvatures and may not be parallel to each other. Alternatively, the third side 518 and the fourth side 520 can be parallel to each other.

The shield 500 includes the groove or the slot 502 shaped to accommodate the protruding slider bar 530. The dimensions of the slot 502 are slightly bigger than the slider bar 530 such that the slider bar 530 can easily extend through the slot 502. The slider bar 530 extends outwards towards the ground 112 through the slot.

The slot 502 includes sections 522a, 522b, 522c, and 522d that correspond to the shape and contour of the slider bar 530 that shall be positioned inside. An edge axis line Y3-Y3, that runs from the front side S1 to the rear side S2 of the vehicle 100, corresponds to the edge 538 of the battery 532. The edge axis line Y3-Y3 intersects the slot 502 to form a first section 526 and a second section 528 of the slot 502. The first section 526 includes a first end 531a of the slider bar 530, the section 522d, and a portion of the section 522c of the slot 502. The second section 528 includes a portion of the section 522c, the sections 522a, 522b of the slot 502, and a second end 531b of the slider bar 530. The first section 526 is located ahead of the edge 534 of the battery 532, towards the front axle 102. The second section 528 is located beside or adjacent to the edge 538 of the battery 532. The second section 528 is closer to the centerline C1-C1, illustrated in FIG. 1B, compared to the first section 526. The second section 528 extends between the front axle 102 and the rear axle 104, illustrated in FIG. 1B.

As shown in FIG. 5B, the slider bar 530 includes a plurality of tabs 504 installed on the surface to couple with the shield 500. The tabs 504 are sheet metal pieces and are attached to the slider bar 530 using any suitable technique, for example, welding. Optionally, the tabs 504 may be manufactured along with the slider bar 530 as a single unit. The tabs 504 are positioned perpendicularly on circumference of the slider bar 530 facing towards the battery pack 532. The tabs 504 are spaced apart on the slider bar 530 at appropriate distances to effectively support the slider bar 530 and shield 500 coupling. The tabs 504 may include secondary structures 505 for gripping the slider bar 530.

The tabs 504 include holes 506 and retainers 508, such as washers or countersinks, for example. The holes 506 and the retainers 508 align with holes 510 on the surface of the shield 500, located near the slot 502. A bolt or a pin 512 is used to traverse through the holes 506, 510 and the tabs 504, respectively. The pin 512 effectively secures the slider bar 530 and the shield 500.

As the shield 500 is coupled onto the battery pack 532, the ground clearance below the battery pack 532 is further decreased by a few millimeters. The distance between a bottom surface of the shield 500 to the underbody 106 is a first height. A height of the slider bar 530 is greater than the first height, thereby ensuring that the slider bar 530 is present below the shield 500 and the battery pack 532, with respect to the lower surface 110 of the underbody 106. In the event the vehicle 100 bottoms out, the slider bar 530 makes

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contact with the road features (e.g., driveway ramps) instead of the battery pack 532 enclosed within the shield 500; thus ensuring the battery pack 532 is protected from scratches or scrapes from the ground and thereby.

The various embodiments described above can be combined to provide further embodiments. All of the U.S. patents, U.S. patent application publications, U.S. patent applications, foreign patents, foreign patent applications and non-patent publications referred to in this specification and/or listed in the Application Data Sheet are incorporated herein by reference, in their entirety. Aspects of the embodiments can be modified, if necessary to employ concepts of the various patents, applications and publications to provide yet further embodiments.

These and other changes can be made to the embodiments in light of the above-detailed description. In general, in the following claims, the terms used should not be construed to limit the claims to the specific embodiments disclosed in the specification and the claims, but should be construed to include all possible embodiments along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled. Accordingly, the claims are not limited by the disclosure.

The invention claimed is:

1. A vehicle, comprising:
 - a front axle;
 - a rear axle;
 - an underbody;
 - a battery pack coupled to the underbody between the front axle and the rear axle; and
 - a slider bar coupled to the underbody, the slider bar being closer to the ground than the battery pack, wherein the slider bar does not overlap the battery pack when viewed from a bottom view of the vehicle.
2. The vehicle of claim 1, further comprising a shield coupled to the underbody and covering the battery pack.
3. The vehicle of claim 2, wherein the shield includes a slot, the slider bar protruding through the shield through the slot.
4. The vehicle of claim 3, further comprising a plurality of tabs welded to the slider bar.
5. The vehicle of claim 4, wherein the tabs are coupled to the shield.
6. The vehicle of claim 5, wherein the tabs are sheet metal, the slider bar is steel, the shield is plastic, and the underbody includes sheet metal.
7. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the slider bar includes:
 - a first end coupled at least 50 cm away from the front axle and the rear axle; and
 - a second end coupled at least 50 cm away from the front axle and the rear axle.
8. A vehicle, comprising:
 - a front axle;
 - a rear axle;
 - an underbody;
 - a battery pack coupled to the underbody between the front axle and the rear axle; and
 - a slider bar including:
 - a first end coupled to the underbody at least 30 cm away from the front axle and the rear axle;

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a second end coupled to the underbody at least 30 cm away from the front axle and the rear axle; and an intermediate portion between the first end and the second end and extending below the underbody lower than the battery pack, wherein the slider bar does not overlap the battery pack when viewed from a bottom view of the vehicle.

9. The vehicle of claim 8, wherein the first end and the second end are each coupled to the underbody at least 50 cm away from both the front axle and the rear axle.

10. The vehicle of claim 8, wherein the first end and the second end are bolted to the underbody.

11. The vehicle of claim 8, further comprising a bracket coupled to the underbody and the intermediate portion.

12. The vehicle of claim 8, wherein the intermediate portion is offset laterally from the battery pack.

13. The vehicle of claim 8, wherein the slider bar has a substantially rectangular cross section.

14. The vehicle of claim 8, wherein the slider bar has a substantially circular cross section.

15. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein an intermediate portion of the slider bar is disposed axially between a lateral edge of the battery pack and a centerline of the vehicle.

16. The vehicle of claim 15, wherein the intermediate portion extends between a first end and a second end of the slider bar, and further wherein the first end is coupled to the underbody at a first distance from the front axle and the second end is coupled to the underbody at a second distance from the rear axle.

17. The vehicle of claim 16, wherein the first distance is greater than the second distance.

18. The vehicle of claim 16, wherein the first end is coupled to the underbody at a first location that is a greater distance from the centerline of the vehicle than a second location at which the second end is coupled to the underbody.

19. A vehicle, comprising:

- a front axle;
- a rear axle;
- an underbody;
- a battery pack coupled to the underbody between the front axle and the rear axle; and
- a slider bar coupled to the underbody and including a first end, a second end, and an intermediate portion between the first end and the second end, wherein the first end is laterally offset a first distance from a central axis of the battery pack, the second end is laterally offset a second distance from the central axis, and the intermediate portion is laterally offset a third distance from the central axis, wherein the second distance is greater than the first distance, and the third distance is greater than the second distance such that the intermediate portion establishes a furthest feature of the slider bar from the central axis, wherein the slider bar does not overlap the battery pack when viewed from a bottom view of the vehicle.

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